

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4482

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, WAS

SUBJECT: CLOSING OF HOSPITAL AT ODIBO

REF: STATE 51500

1. EMBOFF WAS UNABLE TO VISIT ODIBO DURING TRIP TO OWAMBO BUT DID MAKE ENQUIRIES REGARDING CLOSING OF ANGLICAN HOSPITAL THERE. HEAD OF MEDICAL STAFF AT GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL IN OSHAKATI SAID ODIBO FACILITY WAS CLOSED BECAUSE OF LACK OF QUALIFIED STAFF AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, IRREGULARITIES IN BOOKKEEPING. HE ASKED THAT THOSE RUNNING ANGLICAN MISSION AT ODIBO "ARE MORE INTERESTED IN THEOLOGY THAN MEDICINE." DOCTOR POINTED OUT THAT "MODERN SIX-BED CLINIC" HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BY GOVT AT OKATALI, LESS THAN ONE MILE FROM ODIBO.

2. OFFERING DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION, HEAD OF FINNISH MISSIONARIES IN OWAMBO SAID THAT REASON FOR STAFF SHORTAGE AT ODIBO WAS GOVT REFUSAL TO ISSUE PRERMITTS TO ANGLICAN DOCTORS AND NURSES TO WORK AT HOSPITAL. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MANY HOSPITALS IN OWAMBO DO NOT HAVE QUALIFIED STAFF BUT ARE SERVICED BY DOCTORS FROM OSHAUATIWN AS IS NOW THE CASE WITH OKATALI CLINIC. HE FEELS CLOSING WAS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.

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3. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT MEDICAL FACILITIES PROVIDED BY NEW CLINIC ARE AT LEAST AS ADEQUATE AS THOSE PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED AT ODIBO; THIS WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY FINNISH MISSIONARY. THE IMPRESSION AMONG SOME OVAMBOS AND MISSIONAIRES. HOWEVER, IS THAT CLOSING WAS DUE AS MUCH TO POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AS TO CONCERN OVER THE LACK OF PROPERLY QUALIFIED STAFF AND PROBLEMS WITH FINANCIAL RECORDS.
HURD

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